

chiles

have a reputation for being the hotheaded child of the culinary world, but their personality is much more complex. Beneath their bravado, chiles possess unique dispositions. Some varieties hit the palate like a bolt of lightning; others are mild-mannered and sweet, offering hints of raisin, chocolate, anise, and cinnamon to their dishes. Use this guide to get a handle on a variety of peppers.

OVEN-ROASTING PEPPERS



[1] Roast chiles on a foil-lined baking sheet in a 425°F oven for 20 to 25 minutes or until skins are blistered and dark (or broil 4 to 5 inches from heat 8 to 10 minutes).

[2] Bring the foil up and around peppers to enclose. Let stand about 15 minutes or until cool enough to handle (this loosens the skins).

[3] With a knife, loosen edges of the skins from peppers; gently and slowly pull off skins and discard. Use gloves if handling hot peppers.

SEEDING JALAPEÑOS



The seeds and veins of a jalapeño pepper are the hottest part. Luckily, they can be easily removed by sliding a paring knife between the flesh and veins. Do wear plastic or rubber gloves; jalapeños contain volatile oils.

A photograph of several dark green, thick-skinned poblano peppers resting on a rustic, textured surface. One pepper is in the foreground, showing its characteristic shape and stem.

Poblano

[poh-BLAHN-oh]—Thick-skinned and dry-fleshed, these richly flavored chiles resemble a darkened green sweet pepper and vary in heat from mild to racy. Fresh chiles can be stored a week at room temperature or up to three weeks in the refrigerator.

A photograph of several long, slender, pale green Anaheim peppers on a dark, textured surface. The peppers are curved and have a smooth skin.

Anaheim

[AN-uh-hime]—Narrow, long, and pale to medium green, Anaheims hail from Southern California. They are somewhat mild and work well fresh in salsas or roasted. The riper red form of these peppers is called chile Colorado.

A close-up photograph of a single, bright orange-yellow habanero pepper. It has a bumpy, wrinkled skin and a short stem.


Habanero

[ah-bah-NYER-oh]—Popular throughout the Yucatán, these fiery beauties are also called Scotch bonnets. As with all fresh chiles, habaneros can be stored a week at room temperature or up to three weeks in the refrigerator.

A photograph of several small, green serrano peppers on a dark, textured surface. They are pointed and have a slightly wrinkled skin.

Serrano

[say-RAH-noh]—The flesh of fiery-hot serranos is thin and dry, with a strong grassy flavor. In Mexico, these chiles are often called chiles verdes. Use them fresh or cooked.

A photograph of two dried, smoked chipotle peppers. They are dark reddish-brown, wrinkled, and have a slightly curved shape.

Chipotle

[cheep-OHT-lay]—This dried and smoked chile, which began as a fresh jalapeño, has recently enjoyed a great deal of popularity in the United States. Look for spicy, smoky chipotles canned in adobo sauce, pickled, or dried.

A photograph of a single, green jalapeño pepper on a dark, textured surface. It is elongated and slightly curved.

Jalapeño

[hall-ah-PAY-nyoh]—A piquant chile that is thick and juicy, sweet and complex, this short, stout pepper ranges from hot to quite hot. It is popular both raw and cooked. As it ripens, a jalapeño turns red.

A photograph of several dried, wrinkled de Arbol peppers. They are dark red and have a long, thin shape.

de Arbol

[day ARE-bowl]—Short, skinny, brick-red, and with woody stems, these dried chiles offer some real heat and are often used in powdered form. Or toss one or two into soups, stews, or taco meat to add heat.

A photograph of several dried, wrinkled pasilla peppers. They are dark reddish-brown and have a long, thin shape.

Pasilla

[pahs-EE-yah]—In Mexico, pasilla is the name for dried *chile chilacas* and is also called *chile negro*. It is used in traditional mole sauce. Dried chiles are best stored away from sun light in a resealable plastic bag or lidded container.

A photograph of several dried, wrinkled ancho peppers. They are dark burgundy and have a large, wrinkled shape.

Ancho

[AHN-choe]—These wrinkly, dark-burgundy chiles are dried poblanos. When reconstituted, they are mild, rich, and almost sweet, with an evocative hint of milk chocolate flavor.